

## Senate Bill 748

FOR THE CHAIR

To Whom it may concern,

My name is Nicholas Kokas, Vice President of Global Operations for Brentwood's DET headquartered in Macomb Township Michigan.

I really can't believe I am here again for a third time now in a third committee after this same legislation has failed 2 times before in less than 3 years in two different committees. The peoples representatives of the State of Michigan have spoken already and the answer is NO. This is bad legislation for the State of Michigan and Detroit.

I would like to start off by speaking to you of the negative impacts in real life terms on how duplicative regulations since 2000 has impacted our industry and had created a duopoly.

Since 2000, the largest taxi cab and luxury sedan company comprised of over 200 vehicles has now gone out of business. Fiscally business's such as restaurants, hotels and entertainment venues had experienced lost revenues due to chauffeurs not advising leisure and business travelers to enter cities such as Detroit. In a time when business's are desperate for work the city of Detroit had created an environment that forces chauffeurs to simply avoid the city.

Enforcement of these laws has also been a nightmare. Police officers have harassed chauffeurs with high profile clients in vehicles forcing them into taxi cabs while the officer determines if the chauffeur is really licensed or not. This is not the image we want perceived across the United States when individuals are coming here in order to do business. On several instances deals are not done because of the negative unfriendly business environment. In the majority of the cases that I am familiar with the citations were written illegally. The result of these illegally written tickets is a financial strain on limousine companies. Companies can not afford legal fees on a regular basis fighting tickets they should not have received in the first place. I can tell you personally my company had 3 tickets thrown out because they were illegally written and to cost me several thousands of dollars in attorney fees in order to have proper representation in the matters.

According to Limousine and Chauffeured Transportation which is the leading trade and researching publication for limousine companies in the United States, 85% of all limousine companies are considered small business. There is a perception that the limousine industry is filled with glitz, glamor and wealth when in reality they are small business's struggling in

a down economy.

This amendment does not create a level playing field between taxi cabs and limousine operators. While taxi's are only governed by their city bond regulations that they operate in, limousine companies will be required to adhere to both city and State regulations. State regulations are considerably stricter than city regulations with the examples of requiring a minimum \$1,000,000.00 in liability insurance as well as annual state vehicle inspections done by licensed registered mechanics with the State of Michigan. The City of Detroit's safety inspection consists of a police officer walking around the car and collecting a fee. In past attempts to get this Amendment passed Detroit representatives used false safety facts as the main reason why there needs to be bond plates. According to a U.S. Department of Transportation NHTSA Report, limousines are one of the safest modes of passenger transportation period. There is a .0000220 chance a passenger is injured in a limousine. Let me say that again. A .0000220 chance! To put that in perspective a passenger has a higher chance of being injured in an ambulance or a police car than in a limousine.

Another point I would like for everyone here to understand is that our industry serves as Ambassadors to our State. For these out of town decision makers their chauffeur is the first impression and point of contact when entering the region and the chauffeur is also their last. Please help us put our best foot forward when showing these travelers around, that Michigan is a place to do business by voting no on this bill.

In closing not once has the City of Detroit in over 3 years and 2 failed attempts in getting this amendment passed been able to answer one question that has been asked of them during committee hearing meetings. Since increasing safety has been proven not to be increased by passing this amendment. How much revenue is being generated in comparison to the cost of administering the bond plate law in Detroit? Not one person from Detroit to this day has publicly offered how much this program cost the City in the past and it's tax payers.

Thank You,

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